

Claims

- [c1] 1. A data structure comprising: a first field containing data representing a first portion of a patent claim; a second field containing data representing a second portion of a patent claim; and a third field containing data representing a third portion of a patent claim, wherein the third field associates the first field to the second field.
- [c2] 2. The data structure of claim 1, further comprising: a fourth field containing data associating the patent claim of the first field to a patent disclosure providing support for the portion of the claim in the third field.
- [c3] 3. The data structure of claim 2, wherein the association of the fourth field includes a citation to a portion of the patent disclosure.
- [c4] 4. The data structure of claim 2, wherein the association of the fourth field includes a text of the patent disclosure.
- [c5] 5. The data structure of claim 1, wherein the first, second, and third fields contain text of the patent claim.
- [c6] 6. The data structure of claim 1, wherein the second field contains data representative of a class defined in another data structure.
- [c7] 7. The data structure of claim 6, wherein the another data

structure is a lookup table.

- [c8] 8. A method comprising: designating a first definitional element of a patent claim; designating a second definitional element of the patent claim; and designating a relational element of the patent claim, wherein the relational element relates the second definitional element to the first definitional element.
- [c9] 9. The method of claim 8, wherein designating the first definitional element of the patent claim includes designating at least a portion of the patent claim as the first definitional element.
- [c10] 10. The method of claim 9, wherein designating the second definitional element of the patent claim includes designating at least a portion of the patent claim as the second definitional element.
- [c11] 11. The method of claim 8, wherein designating the first and second definitional elements and the relational element of the patent claim includes assigning a class to each of the elements.
- [c12] 12. The method of claim 8, further comprising: associating the patent claim to a patent disclosure providing support for the patent claim.
- [c13] 13. The method of claim 12, wherein associating the patent claim to a patent disclosure providing support for the patent claim comprises: associating the relational element to a portion of the

patent disclosure.

- [c14] 14. The method of claim 13, wherein the associating the relational element of the patent claim to a portion of the patent disclosure comprises: associating one or more words of the patent claim to one or more sentences of the patent disclosure.
- [c15] 15. A method comprising: maintaining a database of patent classes, wherein each class is defined to include elements inherent to the class; and maintaining a database of mapped patent claims, each claim including an element mapped to a patent class, the mapped elements being non-inherent elements of the mapped patent class.
- [c16] 16. The method of claim 15, wherein each of the mapped patent claims is an independent claim.
- [c17] 17. The method of claim 15, wherein the mapped patent claims do not include a dependent claim containing only elements inherent to a class mapped to a parent claim of the dependent claim.
- [c18] 18. A method comprising: comparing patent claim language with language of mapped patent claims; and suggesting a mapping for the patent claim language based on the comparing.
- [c19] 19. A method comprising: generating a list of first definitional elements contained in a universe of patent claims; eliminating

irrelevant first definitional elements; generating a list of relational elements associated with the remaining first definitional elements; eliminating irrelevant relational elements; generating a list of second definitional elements associated to the remaining first definitional elements by the remaining relational elements; and eliminating irrelevant second definitional elements.

[c20] 20. The method of claim 19, wherein first definitional elements only associated with eliminated relational elements are eliminated and wherein relational elements only associated with eliminated second definitional elements are also eliminated.

[c21] 21. A computer readable medium, with instructions thereon, for causing an appropriately configured computer to: generate a list of elements contained within a universe of patent claims; and eliminate elements, wherein eliminating an element present in a patent claim eliminates patent claims depending therefrom.

[c22] 22. The computer readable medium of claim 21, wherein the elements comprise definitional elements and relational elements.